



Well, he's certainly got your eyes

A large head, intense eyes, wet nose and perky ears mark him out as a winner. The dog looks pretty good too. Paddy O'Donnell and Marshall the bull terrier won the 'dog that looks most like its owner' class at Surbiton's sports day. Six-year-old Marshall had a spring in his step as Surbiton vet Kavit Manro, from the recently renamed Voo practice in Claremont Road, pinned on the rosette, and remarked how dog and owner shared "similar dress sense and hair". Paddy was as chuffed as his dog. "I've had him from eight weeks," he said proudly. A French bulldog called Luke beat 24 rivals to be the dog the judges would most like to take home at the dog show on Victoria rec on May 20, which brought to a close a thoroughly successful Surbiton Food Festival. Jaeger was top veteran (over eight), beating Lou, a rescue dog from Spain, and Chip was described by judges as "a perfect gentleman of a dog; the kind that opens doors for other dogs".

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Will Dancing Dan say I do?

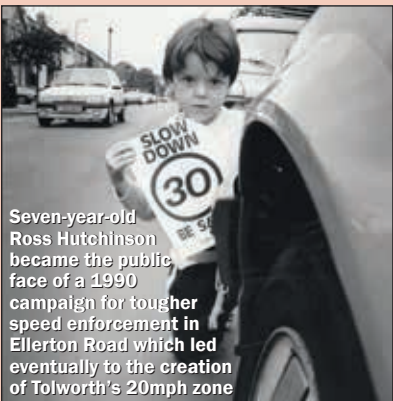
Dancing copper Dan Graham had a marriage offer after entertaining veterans at Surbiton's Star & Garter in full Met Police uniform. As the Britain's Got Talent performer finished his body-popping moves, 102-year-old Vi Butler cheekily inquired: "Are you married?" "I'm not," admitted the Kingston PC, to chuckles from the audience in the Upper Brighton Road home. Said Vi afterwards: "He was very entertaining. I hope he comes back in August for my birthday when I turn 103. It was different in my day, we only had the foxtrot!" Dancing Dan performed three numbers, two with staff from the home. The PC's gyrations went viral on YouTube with more than 1.7million hits, giving Kingston's Met Police an unexpected platform for future recruitment as well as enhanced PR.



20mph limits could vanish

Surbiton's quieter streets will NOT get a blanket 20mph limit, despite the majority wanting it. And the council has decided to review the town's entire 20mph policy, with streets which were given lower limits 22 years ago assessed afresh. Councillors split on political lines, voting to keep the limit at 30mph (but 20mph near schools), despite a 2016 consultation showing 57% of respondents backing a 20 limit for smaller streets. Berrylands and St Mark's wards were for a blanket zone, Surbiton Hill and Alexandra against. Surbiton resident Sharron

Sumner, whose 10-year-old niece spent time in a coma after being hit by a speeding car, pleaded for the lower speed limit in side streets, for safety and for clarity. "Just because no one has died yet is no argument for not cutting the limit," she said. "The majority of residents supported a 20mph zone in two consultations." She was backed by the Lib Dems. Cllr Malcolm Self said his journey from Chiltern Drive to the Guildhall was "30, 20, 30, 20, 30, 20, 30 then 20", with pick 'n' mix limits "totally confusing". He added that while the 20mph zones near schools were welcome, Turn to page 2



Seven-year-old Ross Hutchinson became the public face of a 1990 campaign for tougher speed enforcement in Ellerton Road which led eventually to the creation of Tolworth's 20mph zone

How the 20 zones began

In 1991, Kingston Council blazed the trail with the UK's first 20mph zone in the Groves area of New Malden, followed by Tolworth (Bond, Douglas, Ellerton roads etc) in 1995. Grand Avenue primary's zone was next in 2001, then King Charles Road and the river roads in 2005. The Department for Transport calculated that the 20mph areas had seen a two-thirds reduction in child casualties. New York has cut its overall speed limit to 25mph, while Paris and Milan are soon to get a 30kph (19mph) limit.



The big apple: Toni Izard grapples with an idea which is bearing fruit. But here's the crunch. You can read more about Toni's core principles on p3. Pip, pip!

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Are you at the time of life to take up cricket?

Flavoured insects caused a buzz at the fete in St Andrew's Square, although the beer tent had more enthusiastic takers.

Two days of food and music filled the leafy quadrangle to capacity as attendance soared to make it one of the most successful Surbiton Food Festival events ever.

Offerings ranged from tacos to wraps, crepes to toasties, Sicilian lemons to Turkish delight, while Berrylands' favourite greengrocer, Stears, sold out of fresh veg.

But the most intriguing reaction was kept for Kric8, a Hersham-based firm selling dried protein-rich crickets from a farm in Canada.

"I got interested in eating insects when travelling," said Ross Bell, pictured left. "I began with woodlice and worked



up to crickets. We're catching up with the rest of the world. Two billion people have eaten insects."

Wife Teresa is also a convert. "They're genuinely tasty," she said. "Although plain ones can be a little dry, like pork scratchings."

She's right. Crunchy and crispy, the honey mustard ones are like tiny pieces of dry-roasted peanuts.

They're not wildly flavoursome on their own, but if this is the future of sustainable food-production, it's interesting to be a pioneer taster.

Surbiton reacted well. "People here are very adventurous. After all, it is the home of The Good Life and self-sufficiency," said Ross. "Children are bravest; several came back for seconds!"

Anyone with a shellfish allergy was advised not to try, but everyone else either tucked in... or screwed up their face in horror.

Next up for Kric8, cricket bolognese sauce and cricket pasta.

Tim Harrison

Tennis discounts

Players competing in Surbiton's premiere tennis tournament get cut-price food if they take their post-match appetites to Langleys.

The restaurant in Ewell Road is giving participants in the Aegon Surbiton Trophy (June 3-11) a discount... and have extended the deal to cover ticket-holders and Surbiton Racket and Fitness Club members. Simply ask for the tennis tournament special menu.

Meanwhile chefs Mandar Desai and Jay Panchal are planning a Pimms and Ploughman's night, with live music, on the last Friday of June (June 30), with wines, dessert wines and cocktails themed to different cheeses, home-made chutneys and breads. Book at 020 8390 7564.



Rise & shine

Star baker at the Surbiton Farmers' Market bake-off was Jemma Rice, 10, pictured with her olive, rosemary, and sundried tomato wreath loaf.

Topless Chef Matt Adlard, oddly in grey cardie, judged, and said Jemma's loaf had held its shape perfectly. "You're just amazing," he told her.

Christine Hall was best amateur boulanger with a breakfast loaf, made with bacon, beans, sausage, tomato and mushroom.

"You could taste every element," said Matt. At the end, all loaves entered were sold for charity.

Beer festival is ale and hearty



The Hook Beer Festival at the scout hut, Verona Drive, Surbiton, attracted 900 people, drawn to 54 ales and 20 ciders.

More than £10,000 was raised for Shooting Star Chase and 1st Hook Scouts.

The brainchild of Neil McLean, recently honoured with a mayor's

award, it has raised £75,000 since it began eight years ago (when there were 36 beers and no cider).

With music from the Hook house band, and a small army beavering away in the kitchen to produce food, the hall was buzzing.

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Keith is celebrating the joy of ceps

Even if it starts small, it could mushroom. That was the message from one of the more intriguing events at this year's Surbiton Food Festival; an open discussion on the possibilities of suburban farming, which concluded with a shared determination to set up a community allotment project (**more on p6**).

A gathering of like-minded souls met at the Museum of Futures, Brighton Road, to germinate the seeds of ideas.

But the show was stolen, at least at the initial meeting, by Surbiton beekeeper and honey producer Keith McMahon - well known to regulars at Surbiton Farmers' Market - who has spent several months experimenting with bagging used coffee grounds from Pickled Pantry, St Mark's Hill, adding straw and fungal spores, storing the bags at optimal temperature and then harvesting the remarkable crops which emerge from cuts in the bag: profusions of tasty mushrooms.

Like a magician unveiling a spectacular trick, Keith

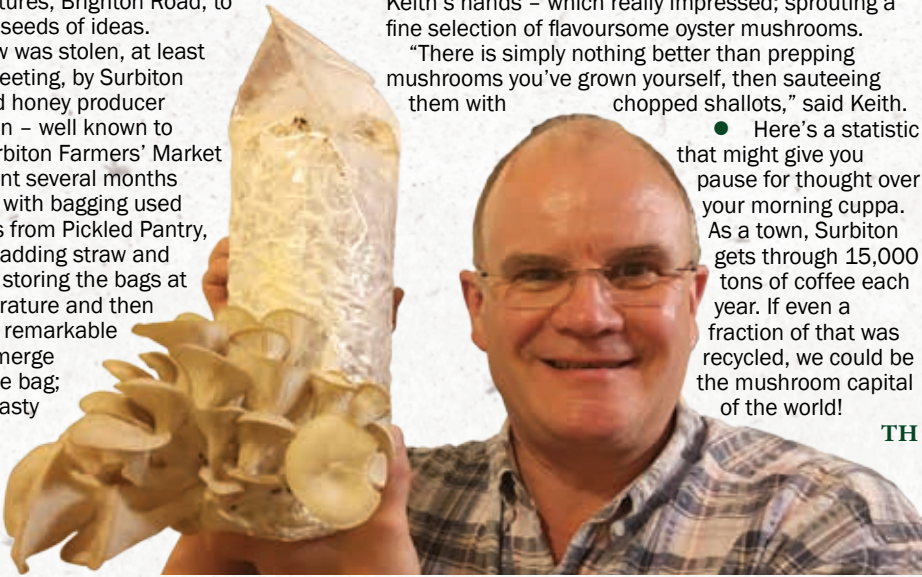
disappeared from sight, then emerged holding a dull-looking sealed bag of old coffee grounds... the perfect sterile compost as it has had steam forced through it.

Next he produced a bag which was two weeks old. It had become a bit furry inside. Bag three, which was a month old, had transformed into a rock-solid cylinder, and had turned white from the original brown.

But it was the one after that - pictured here, in Keith's hands - which really impressed; sprouting a fine selection of flavoursome oyster mushrooms.

"There is simply nothing better than prepping mushrooms you've grown yourself, then sauteeing them with chopped shallots," said Keith.

● Here's a statistic that might give you pause for thought over your morning cuppa. As a town, Surbiton gets through 15,000 tons of coffee each year. If even a fraction of that was recycled, we could be the mushroom capital of the world!



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20mph zone review

● Continued from page 1

80% of car accidents involving children happened outside those areas. "A 20 zone is also 10 times safer for elderly people."

Conservative Cllr Richard Hudson said most accidents on a 'hot spot' map were on main roads not covered by any side-street reduction.

"And the Greenway, which is 20mph, is littered with accidents," he said, arguing for more flashing warning signs and bespoke calming.

"Thinking on 20mph zones has moved on," he added, pointing to Manchester's reversal on 20mph after it led to a 4mph rise on some roads.

Cllr Liz Green (Lib Dem) cited anomalies such as Claremont Road, from the Maple Road end, being 20mph, then jumping to 30mph as drivers approach Waitrose... despite the busy bus stop area being where most pedestrians choose to cross.

Conservative Cllr Phil Doyle said if drivers couldn't work out the difference between 20 and 30 zones "they shouldn't be on the road".

After the 20mph blanket zone vote was lost, council leader Cllr Kevin Davis's call for a review of all existing 20 zones was passed. It will begin shortly.

Tim Harrison

Hear that creak?

Over 45? Starting to creak? Free knee-joint exercises run twice weekly at Surbiton library annexe, from June 5, 11.45am, for anyone suffering osteoarthritis. Register for Better Bones by calling 0300 123 8086.

Avoiding scams

Learn how to protect yourself from internet fraud and rogue traders at a free interactive trading standards advice session, St Mark's church hall, Saturday June 10, 9.45am.

Awards await

Surbiton traders can enter 2017's business excellence awards, with prizes for customer service, retailer, charity and 10 more categories. Visit www.kingstonawards.co.uk

A nice rub-down

Bookings are being taken for a charity indulgence day on June 24, 31 Upper Brighton Road, including massages and reflexology. 10.30am-6pm for African Vision Malawi. Book via Lorraine.mole@africanvision.org.uk

Bicycles only

Cyclists will rule Portsmouth Road on July 29 and 30, for the annual Prudential RideLondon event, with cars banned for the weekend.

A store's history

The history of the John Lewis stores is the topic of David Sheehan's illustrated talk at Surbiton & District Historical Society's meeting on Tuesday June 6, 7.30pm at the library hall, Ewell Road. Visitors welcome.

Mrs B's resolve

Mrs Bennet's vow to marry off her daughters in Pride and Prejudice is mirrored by Regency dance queen Libby Curzon's resolve to get Surbiton quadrilling. It's a fiver an evening (tea included) on June 14 & 28 at St Mark's church hall, Church Hill Road. 8pm. Soft-sole shoes and lightweight gear.

A step change

Want to increase your step count? Help deliver The Good Life! It's only six times a year and you see a lot of fascinating front gardens. If you're able to offer help now and again, email thegoodlifesurbiton@gmail.com

Fines over £2m

The latest stats on drivers fined for going through the Surbiton Crescent traffic barrier reveal 38,456 motorists have been caught, adding £2,080,112 to the council's coffers... which makes the average fine a perplexingly odd £54.09.

Plan interrupted

The election has paused Tolworth's area plan after the 'walking workshops' in March, when residents strolled the Broadway with consultants from We Made That. It resumes on June 26.

Support group

Surbiton Fertility Group meets at Wags 'n' Tales, Brighton Road, on June 20, 7pm, for miscarriage and infertility support (surbitonfertilitygroup@gmail.com).



Bishop pays visit

Bishop Richard Cheetham released balloons to mark 50 years of Ditton Road's Fircroft Trust, the mental health and learning disabilities charity. Students from nearby Southborough High School ran a coconut shy and other games.

Overheard in...

Balaclava Road. A four-year-old spotted Mr Whippy parked at Victoria rec. "Daddy, can I have an ice cream?" he begged. "He's only selling broccoli today," replied the father. The poor little lad looked utterly crestfallen.



Quick! To the Catmobile!

Surbiton cat owners no longer have daunting journeys to the vet when their moggies need an op, because the veterinary operating theatre comes to you.

The Catmobile is the UK's first fully mobile, exclusively feline operating theatre, custom-built for cat doctor Amy Bergs.

She set up in 2013, with Surbiton at the heart of her catchment area, making home visits rather than putting puss (and owner) through the wringer of the trip to the vet.

She now has two more staff members, Denise Morris and Mary Kim, alongside right-hand woman Shreen Haywood.

"It makes more productive use of time, and it's a lot better

for the cat," said Amy, after she and Shreen had extracted a tooth from 11-year-old Buddy while the van was parked in the owner's drive.

The operating theatre on wheels has air-con, hot water and its own power. Two operating rooms mean everything from spaying to abdominal surgery can be carried out steps from a cat's familiar front door, in earshot of the sounds of home.

More than 400 cats are regular



patients, with the Catmobile already doing service at homes in Lovelace Road and behind Victoria Road.

The van was designed by specialist Chris Odd, and is the first to be accredited to Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' standards.

It means the end of stressful journeys to clinics, as furry patients are home the moment they are awake enough to be moved.

"With no barking dogs or strange cats to contend with, it keeps stress levels to a minimum and thus aids their recovery," said Amy.

The Catmobile was launched at a party attended by 100 of Amy's customers. More at www.thecatdoctor.co.uk

Tim Harrison

Spare fruit? Take your pick

If, like Toni Izard, below, you're about to wrestle with too much garden fruit, here's the answer. A volunteer group, Abundance, harvests seasonal gluts of fruit including apples, pears and plums.

Produce is redistributed, some making juice at local events, and all on a non-profit making basis.

"Every year tons of fresh, local fruit are wasted because no one picks it," said Toni, who lives at the top of Ditton Hill. "This year we want to save more fruit for local use, so if you have a tree you need



help with, or know someone who has, or if you see a street tree full of unwanted fruit, get in touch."

Either offer unpicked fruit to Abundance, or sign up as a volunteer picker, by calling 07749 633 973 or visiting www.tinyurl.com/k9yzp4z



After deciding it was unrealistic to bring real ponies into St Andrew's and St Mark's school for a gymkhana, the resourceful young horsewomen of 3rd Surbiton Brownies improvised. Picking up on a Finnish craze, the pack of 25 made their own hobby horses from dowling sticks and stuffed socks, then performed showjumping and dressage for parents. Cllr Diane White, who helped get a grant towards the horse-making, and Surbiton's guiding district commissioner Val Reid, presented prizes. By early evening, Maple Road was full of hobby horses trotting home.

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He took the Krays' dabs

A Surbitonian for a quarter of a century, Richard Gamper – who died on May 8 – was the copper who fingerprinted the Krays.

He was also the great nephew of Joan Gamper, founder of FC Barcelona, and once made a memorable trip to the Nou Camp, where he was treated like football royalty in the president's box.

Born in Yorkshire in 1944, he was educated in the West Country, leaving school in 1962 to train as a surveyor. His mother spotted an ad for the police in the paper, and bet him £100 he wouldn't join. Richard called her bluff.

He served in the West End Central nick in the swinging 60s, was shot at by a burglar, told The Beatles to turn the volume down as they played Get Back on the rooftop of Apple in 1969, and was one of 40 bobbies sent to the Caribbean with a force of paras to quell unrest in Anguilla – dubbed The Bay of Piglets. As peace was rapidly restored, he spent nine months snorkelling.

A gangly 24-year-old six-footer, he was acting custody officer on May 8

1968 when Kray twins Ronnie and Reggie, 34, were arrested in a dawn raid.

"I was the 'jailer', responsible for the charge room," he recalled. "The door flew open and a gang tumbled in. I recognised the Krays, but the rest, police and villains, looked just the same!"

"I took Reggie's fingerprints. I was on my own with him; he was short, but so broad and big-shouldered. He said: 'I've

got nothing against you; don't worry mate.'

"I put him back in the cell, and asked if he wanted breakfast. He told me to get

lost, so I ordered breakfast and had it myself before I went off duty!"

Gamps (as he was widely nicknamed) left the force in 1970, joined the personnel office of British Gas, then met and married art student Eleanor.

They moved to Avenue South, Surbiton, in 1976, produced Joanna and Edward, and the family became immersed in panto and musical productions at Ellerton Hall, then the cornerHOUSE (where Richard was a trustee), with Eleanor writing music



and witty lyrics, and Richard – his roles always enhanced by his distinctive, gurgling chuckle – invariably playing a baddie.

He sang in the St Matthew's church choir, was a school governor and churchwarden, and carried on panto acting until 2001, when the family moved to Hove, where he and Eleanor continued their theatrical links.

He was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer in 2013.

● Richard Gamper, Mar 10 1944 - May 8 2017, is survived by Eleanor, his two children and two grandchildren. **Tim Harrison**

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Richard Gamper

A valuable insight

In his final act as sitting MP before dissolution ended parliament, James Berry cut the ribbon at Seymours estate agent, Brighton Road. Partner John Flynn sold Berry his Surbiton home.

"John and his team have excellent local knowledge," he said. "I've worked with John, so can say first hand that he offers a friendly, reliable service. As a local man he has a valuable insight you don't always find at other agents."

● The Kingston & Surbiton seat is being contested on Thursday by: Michael Basman (Ind), James Berry (Con), Chinnners (Monster Raving Loony), Ed Davey (Lib Dem), Graham Matthews (UKIP), Laurie South (Lab) and Chris Walker (Green). **Esher & Walton** (including Long Ditton) is between Baron Badger (Monster Raving Loony), Andrew Davis (Lib Dem), Lana Hylands (Lab), David Ions (UKIP), Della Reynolds (Ind), Olivia Palmer (Green) and Dominic Raab (Con).



Hollyfest set to get Surbiton Hill rocking

Surbiton's equivalent of Woodstock – Hollyfest – is the summer happening in the grounds of Hollyfield School, Surbiton Hill Road.

Staged on Saturday July 8 (4pm until fireworks at dusk) it features a string of live school bands and live acts, a rodeo bull,

dance tent and games. The event is not restricted to the school, but is open to the wider community. It was last held in 2015, centred on the stage (above) outside the historic Albury House, built 1856.

It is all to raise cash for the school. Tickets from hollyfieldpta.org/hollyfest

39 Steps to a night of comedy

Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python and you have the intriguing and unmissable The 39 Steps.

The show, coming to the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road in July, hurtles a notorious fugitive and a spellbound blonde from a London music hall to Scotland's most remote highlands. Will they save Britain from a den of devious spies?

The 39 Steps is a gripping Olivier Award-winning comedy thriller adapted from the 1915 John Buchan novel and the 1935 film by Alfred Hitchcock. Four actors from the Green Theatre Company play 150 characters in this fast-paced tale of an ordinary man on an extraordinary adventure.

Director Maria Clinton said: "I've wanted to direct this crazy and fun play for a long time as I'm a huge Hitchcock fan and love old films. This combines

both perfectly. I really encourage as many people as possible to come along to the cornerHOUSE and laugh as much as I did when I first saw it in the West End a few years ago."

Tickets for the show on July 20-22 at 7.45pm, cost £8 (£6 concs). To book, email thegreentheatrecompany@gmail.com or call 07462 751682.

Summer concert

Time's passage, with Jonathan Dove's The Passing of the Year and Cecil Armstrong Gibbs' The Turning Year, is Kingston Choral Society's summer concert theme at St Andrew's Church, Maple Road. Tchaikovsky's Seasons for piano complete a varied programme on Saturday, July 1 at 7.30pm (open rehearsal at 2.30pm). Tickets £5-£13 via 020 8977 4801 or www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/241145

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You're half the woman you were

There can be few sights as arresting as this trio of leggy ladies who stand barefoot outside a Tolworth Broadway clothing shop, sawn off at the midriff like magicians' assistants after a trick which has gone horribly wrong. Shoppers stop and stare, motorists do double takes and teenagers pose for selfies with the black, white and denim half-people, who look about to leg it across the Greenway.

Design trends

Planning is key



Starting a home redecoration project? Feeling overwhelmed? These steps below make the process easier and the results more satisfying, with planning being the key to success.

- Analyse how you live and what represents you; not what a friend or a neighbour likes. It's your home and it should reflect you. As New York designer Billy Baldwin said: "Be faithful to your own taste because nothing you really like is ever out of style."

- Create mood boards. Go through magazines and brochures to figure out what appeals to you. Put the images on your mood board, sit down and compare them. What are common denominators in terms of colour, furniture style, pattern etc?

- Ask yourself what you're trying to achieve. Don't try to replicate whole schemes you've seen; they won't work the same way in your own space.

- Floor plans are not as sexy as choosing paint colour and fabrics, but are essential for success. Use computer programs (Sketch is popular) or graph paper, ruler and pencil. Draw your furniture to scale separately, cut the shapes out and start positioning them until you find your perfect layout.

- Keep heavy objects far from the entry point, aim for balance, don't always push against the walls, and think about movement through the space.

- Time to move on to sample boards. Use real samples that represent all key elements in your space, in proportion to how they will appear.

- Go back to your mood board and check if the concept colours come through, if you have good balance between colours, and enough texture and contrast.

- Never commit until you have a complete scheme.

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Karate kings

Excited children were striking poses and high-kicking on the jigsaw mats which practically filled a large room in a block behind the BT Exchange in Ewell Road.

Karate teacher Jack Holdbrook was taking the four to 10-year-olds through their paces – and the children were having fun.

"I love doing the pushing and kicking," said a thoughtful Imogen Sherjan, 7. "And I get to know new stuff like how to defend myself."

Eva Romanet-Campana, 7, Miles Cheng-Scott, 8, and Marius Pryce, 9, all agreed.

"My favourite move is the straight leg roundhouse kick," said Eva breathlessly, while Miles and Marius were quick to reassure me no one gets hurt. "You never punch hard to the body – you can do that on the sparring pad – but not the body," they explained.

They enjoy seiki juku at Surbiton Karate club; a traditional form of Japanese karate where students are primarily taught self-defence, co-ordination, balance, grappling techniques and holds. For higher level adults it's a contact sport.

Jack, who has the honorary title sensei (teacher in Japanese), has led the club for four years. Trained under mentor Frank Perry, a respected UK karate master, the 25-year-old hopes to bring the benefits of the sport to a wider audience in Surbiton.

Jack took up karate at nine, got his first degree black belt at 13, and became an assistant instructor a year later. Now the experienced third degree Dan black belt runs adult and junior classes at Surbiton Amateur Boxing Club, and teaches mixed

ability groups of adults and children together (popular with families) at Southborough High School, Hook Road. Students take part in regional and national competitions.

The teaching assistant for special needs children at Lime Tree primary hopes to bring seiki juku to more schools locally, as part of a sixth-form enrichment programme or via after-school clubs. He says the martial art brings huge benefits – a boost in self-esteem and confidence, a high level of fitness and increased co-ordination skills – as well as the know-how to defend yourself.

Of his classes, Jack said: "People have fun, they keep fit and they feel they are a part of something. Everyone in my classes always gets on really well. The youngest I teach is four, the oldest, so far, is in their 40s. We have an even male-to-female ratio, which is good."

Classes follow school terms: one session is £6, two £10, or a term £36 or £60 respectively. You don't need expensive gear. He has all the equipment. "Come along and see if you like it; all you need is a pair of tracksuit bottoms," he said.

- Visit www.surbitonkarate.com for more about the club, or email surbiton@bu-sen.co.uk

Jane Grove



From back: Marius, 9, Miles, 8, and Imogen and Eva, both 7

Zero, nothing, nada

Spending Friday eavesdropping, I experienced a phenomenon, The Great Surbiton Silence. It was almost eerie. M&S was empty. Awaiting conversational riches, I did a quick circuit to make sure no one was hiding among the eggs at the back. Not a soul. I skedaddled.

It's OK, I assured myself. Poundland is a hotbed of emotion, I'll get some gems there. Not a peep. Literally, just mute people buying stuff for a pound.

My heart lifted at the bored man trailing after his wife by the cereal. I loitered, waiting for the inevitable 'Jean, If we don't get out of here soon I'll top myself' but all I got was 'Lunch after this, yes?' 'Yes.'

I bought a lightbulb and two packets of sweets (when in Rome...), and tried Superdrug. Not even music. This emporium to toiletries always plays something innocuous. But not today. All I got was an elderly woman peering crossly at the make-up sponges.

M&Co. Surely there'd be some middle-aged-daughter-takes-elderly-mother-clothes-shopping-and-immediately-regrets-it nuggets?

A noiseless shrine. A few figures drifting round the racks like bargain-hunting ghosts. No music. By now I was beginning to feel creeped out; these shops always play music. Had I caught them mid-CD change?

Fine. If Surbiton wasn't going to speak to me, I'd go somewhere you couldn't avoid me: a coffee



shop, a veritable cacophony of intimate revelations. I walked into a splattering of silent people staring at their phones.

Surbiton, I was furious with you. In order for me to get an insight into what you are thinking and what you are about, you have to speak to each other. Is that too much to ask? Otherwise these Good Life articles are just going to become a list of things I've eaten for dinner – and let me assure you, no one wants that!

But I was determined, so I bought a coffee and sat in the middle of everyone. There was a table of four retirees deep in conversation next to me. Aha! I thought; this will produce some humorous nuggets.

I got out my notebook and pen, and girded my loins for hilarity. Unfortunately, as I was sitting too close to the dishwasher, coupled with loud jazz and incessant hissing of milk being frothed, I heard diddly squat. So I sat and wrote this.

I was just about to put down my pen when suddenly the hiss of steam stopped and one of the male seniors said very loudly: 'I couldn't sit down for a week.' Finally.

Becky Mayhew

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Gardening tips by Janice Cripps



Gardeners turn grey to green

With Chelsea gone and Hampton Court on the horizon, what are the leading trends?

Over the years, flower shows have moved away from the traditional English garden to challenge convention with diverse planting, fresh layouts and thought-provoking ideas.

Nigel Dunnett's urban garden at Chelsea sparked controversy with its mural of cranes, tower blocks and graffiti-style art by Sheffield artist Jo Peel. But it was sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society, an organisation steeped in history with a mission to promote excellence in horticulture and gardening.

All too often the RHS been criticised for fuddy-duddy attitudes and failure to move with the times. Well not this year!

Its central theme of Greening Grey Britain is a welcome part of a broader message about helping the environment and encouraging wildlife and biodiversity in urban areas. And everyone can do their bit, even if it's just planting a small window box.

While there's a continuing emphasis on sustainability and using everyday materials in new and interesting ways, an intriguing trend is emerging towards using gardens to explore the harmony between people, plants



Kingston Gardening Club members find inspiration at Loseley Park near Guildford

and the environment. I enjoyed the see-through wall of steel at Chelsea, centrepiece of Wellington College's Breaking Ground garden, which brought this concept to life.

The initiative is also about community spirit and encouraging friends and neighbours to work together to reclaim grey spaces. In Surbiton, Karen George has started the Kingston Gardening Club, meeting regularly to visit gardens, exchange ideas and plant-swap. Join at www.meetup.com/kingston-gardening-club

Karen is organising a group visit to the Hampton Court Flower Show, which runs July 4-9.

Janice Cripps is a professional Surbiton garden designer. For advice, planting plans, or projects – from concept to completion – www.janicecripps.co.uk

Wild about Surbiton, by Elliot Newton



Reviving the forlorn beds

Growing up in Surbiton, I've walked past the old telephone exchange at the top of St Mark's Hill countless times, and every time my eyes have fallen upon the neglected, forlorn, raised beds at the front of the building.

So at the end of April, volunteer groups (Kingston Environment Centre, Surbiton Wildlife Group, the Environment Trust etc) came together to improve the area for pollinators and people by planting wildflowers and herbaceous plants.

Since the Second World War, the UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows, which has negative repercussions that can be felt throughout our ecosystems; reducing flowers for our bees and butterflies to pollinate, as well as reducing countless other invertebrates that are essential food for our bird species.

More than 30 volunteers turned up. After weeding the beds with hoes and preparing the soil with mattocks, we planted herbaceous plants including sage,



Preparing the soil at the old telephone exchange



Some of the volunteers

lavender, thyme, rosemary and marjoram. These have been selected as they will provide flowers from early spring to late summer, providing pollen for the longest possible period.

We then prepared the perennial seed mix of 25 species including lady's bedstraw, St John's wort, greater and black knapweed, mixing with sharp sand to help spread it evenly throughout the site.

Wildflowers typically like nutrient-poor soil as it restricts competition from fast-growing plants which need nutrient-rich soils. Fortunately the soil in these beds is depleted in nutrients.

Hopefully, as these seeds and plants take hold, they will create a small haven for wildflowers, butterflies and bees, showing how our urban environments can support wildlife.

Next time you're passing, take a look. If you want to find out more, get in touch. We have lots of exciting projects planned where the community can come together and improve our local environment.

Email nature conservation officer Elliot Newton at: elliott.newton@environmenttrust.org

Community allotment plan is unveiled



Tolworth's imminent flat-building convulsion (the biggest population surge since the 1930s) underlines the need for every scrap of natural space.

That was the message at a suburban farming meeting at Surbiton's recent food festival.

Robin Hutchinson from The Community Brain seeks a volunteer-led revival of old allotment land off King Charles Road (postcode KT5 9BG, entrance by Travis Perkins builders merchant).

Pictured left and below, it includes the overgrown, boarded-up former allotment produce shop.

With input from local university students, the space is being redesigned for community growing, to produce food and spur others to start cultivating their own land.

"More and more land is being built on, so every bit that can be grown on becomes more valuable," said supporter Keith McMahon. "Any front garden can be turned into a productive area for, say, herbs and runner beans. Allotments are fantastic levellers; people from all walks of life work on them."

Robin said that while primary schools encourage children to grow fresh produce, their efforts stall after the summer hols, with everything overgrown and past its best when youngsters return in September.

"We need to show that with minimal effort and clever thought you can change attitudes, modelling growing on a co-operative form of allotment management," he said.

He stressed the aim was not to duplicate work being done just across the A3 at Knollmead (see below), but to use the allotment to inspire others to grow their own, and to create further urban veg spaces.

"We want to stimulate people to believe that they can provide food for their own tables," he said.

Surbiton is already utilising odd spaces for cultivation; the roof of the fire station is planted, for instance.

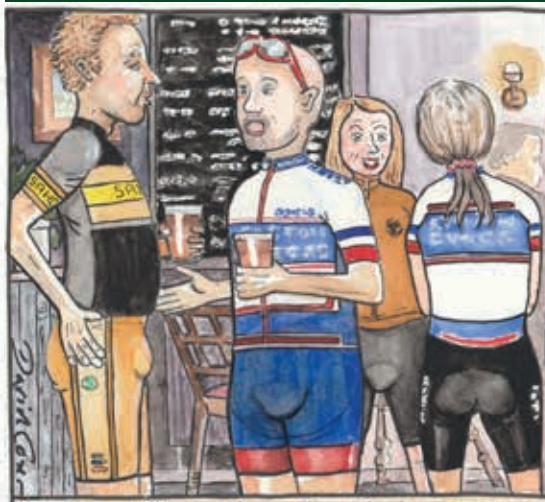
A suburban farming allotment party, to let everyone see round, is being held at the plot on the longest day, **Wed June 21 from 6.30pm**.

Neighbouring allotment holders are delighted. "It would be good to see that area brought back to life; it needs livening up," said Malcolm Spring, 10 years a plot holder.

Robin added: "The great thing is, this allotment exists. We can use it to encourage people to look at their own spaces."

"The community can have an impact on how Tolworth develops; it's a neglected part of the borough, but with huge potential. We can hold developers to account and try to embed growing spaces in the local authority's thinking." **Tim Harrison**

SURBITON LIFE by David Cox



Sunday at The Antelope: You take it on trust these people have actually been on a bike ride



Greener options

Another project hungry for volunteer help – and marking its 25th anniversary – is Tolworth's permaculture reserve, by the Knollmead allotments, behind Knollmead primary school.

With fruit-growing in an acre of natural, sustainable, managed land, it's a haven for wildlife as well as a bountiful food production area. At a recent open day,

Brian Shindler, pictured, gave tours and outlined the principles.

"Industrial farming's problem is short-termism," he said, pointing to the mix of fruit trees, bushes and cultivation zones at Knollmead.

It's also one of the most peaceful, relaxed havens in the borough.

Visit www.kpr2016.wordpress.com to add your name to Shindler's list.

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Football writer Michael Cox, whose articles are illustrated with more arrows than filled the air at Hastings, forensically analyses the Premier League era in a new book.

The Mixer (HarperCollins, £16.99) looks at 25 years of top-flight play, from a rigid 4-4-2 (plus umpteen back-passes) to the fluid age of 3-5-3 with all stops in between.

Michael's book is anything but fusty. The Westfield Road writer, best known for Guardian sports page sidebars, dissecting Jurgen Klopp's mid-match shuffles or Pep Guardiola's attacking switches, has created a book illuminated with insightful anecdotes, not dry stats.

It celebrates characters who have changed the game, notably continental managers who have brought a fresh perspective. Take Antonio Conte. "He's fantastic," said

Cox in the box

Michael. "What he did at Juventus was remarkable, and he's done something similar at Chelsea."

Michael, who describes The Mixer as "a story, rather than a manual", anticipates fresh formation twists in 2017-18 as he monitors the league's relentless evolution.

The Kingstonian season ticketholder who, back in the day, was a nipper at St Andrew's & St Mark's in Maple Road, describes the Premier League as "the most tactically diverse in the world".

His tip for at-a-glance assessing of whether a team is playing 4-1-2-3 or 3-2-4-1? "Look at the formation when the team is without the ball," he said. "It's only shorthand, anyway."

Tim Harrison



Plucky duo's free class

A free masterclass for aspiring guitar players led by professionals Tom Ellis and Laura Snowden, pictured, will be held at the cornerHOUSE this month.

Laura and Tom have appeared as a duo at venues including the Purcell Room and Cadogan Hall, played at major music festivals, and have performed with John Williams.

They will be holding one-to-one classes at the arts centre in Douglas Road, Surbiton.

The workshop on Sunday,

June 11, from 2-5pm, is open to all guitarists, whether classical, folk or rock. Applicants should send a refundable deposit of £10. Contact Simon Hancock at simonhancock29@gmail.com for details or to reserve your place.

The masterclass is run in partnership with Thames Concerts and Kingston Arts. Participants can also, if they wish, perform in a short concert at the end of the afternoon. Entry to the concert, which runs from 5.15-6pm is £5, payable on the door.

Public hanging

It's your last chance to admire – or perhaps buy – one of the paintings in Surbiton Arts Group's spring show, daily 11am-4pm until end of the afternoon on Saturday June 3. There are also hand-made greetings cards for sale. The show is in the library hall, Ewell Road.

Some day your prints will come

Surbiton's Photo Circle meets on Wed July 12, Wags n Tales, Brighton Road, 7.30pm, to offer supportive murmurings and occasionally coo with pleasure at the pictures brought along on memory sticks. It's free and open to all. Admire the work of others by visiting at surbitonphotocircle.weebly.com

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Rocket man with eye for design

Three, two, one, lift off! Vincent-Valentino, pictured below, a six-year-old with a gift for design, created Power Generator X to Mars, a Blue Peter-style box 'n' bottle starship in vivid orange; one of several astral installations in the recent Space, Peace, and The Stuff Fairytales are Made Of show at Brighton Road's Museum of Futures.

All members of the creative family from Effingham Road contributed, with sister Tate,

three, eerily capturing her parents' facial expressions in a group portrait.

"I help a bit with colouring," said Anita Cauchi of Effingham Road. "But it's collaborative."

The show attracted dozens of visitors. "I think it's upside down," said Anita, turning Power Generator X over. "No it isn't," insisted the artist, wrestling the spaceship from his mother's grasp in a manual in-flight manoeuvre, and restoring it to its original position.



Uplifting concert

A family-friendly summer concert, performed by North Kingston Choir and featuring modern and uplifting songs and a live band will be staged at the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road on Saturday, June 10. The concert, at 4pm, is in support of the Samaritans. Tickets: £5, children free. Book at www.northkingstonchoir.org.uk

Putting on a show

If you love singing, acting and dancing, Hinchley Manor Operatic Society runs its 12th summer workshop for six to 18s at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, August 14-19. There will be a show for the public at the end of the week. Previous summer workshops have produced performances of The Little Mermaid, High School Musical, Alice in Wonderland and Seussical. More from HMOS chairman Kelly Neilson, 07917 107636, kellyneilson@btinternet.com

Reflecting on a decade

Blasts from the past feature in two shows coming to the cornerHOUSE in June.

On Tuesday, June 27 at 8pm, Kingston Junior Drama Company's Tuesday group will revive Paradise, the first play it staged at the Douglas Road arts centre in 2007. Paradise is a one-act play about a group of Victorian orphans being transported to a new life in America. When their ship is caught in a treacherous storm, they find themselves marooned on an island where a series of mysterious findings changes the course of their journey. The following night at 7.30pm, the youth drama company's Wednesday wing will treat audiences to a selection of scenes from its productions over the past 10 years, and explain the background to these shows.

Tickets are £4 for each performance or you can pay £5 to see both. Reservations only. Email kingstonjdc@aol.com

To celebrate 10 years on stage, KJDC is exhibiting a selection of production photographs throughout July at the cornerHOUSE. A gala evening, open to all, on Friday, July 7 at 7pm will launch the Kingston Junior Drama Company – 10 Years on Stage exhibition.



Why did Humpty Dumpty die?

Have tissues ready for The Drama Factory show, The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty. The newly formed drama club at Southborough High School, Hook Road, is taking productions to the community.

The moving drama by David Calcutt focuses on a boy who is bullied at school, and the heart-rending consequences when things spiral out of control. Performed by an all-male cast of 12 to 14-year-olds, and supported by a crew of 12s to 18s, the show tackles issues around bullying, friendship, loyalty, prejudices and the media.

Tickets for The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty at the arts centre in Douglas Road, on Friday, June 30 at 7.30pm, are £8 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/dramafactory

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Helen Duffy, now studying Politics & Philosophy at LSE

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The new Co-op opens with a customer divi



Fitters have been putting the finishing touches to Surbiton's new Co-op which opens on June 8, complete with the famous 'divi'.

Manager Magdalena Sinani proudly states that the store opposite the Royal Oak, at the Ellerton Road/Ewell Road junction, has "locally sourced produce, seasonal veg and 100% fresh British meat".

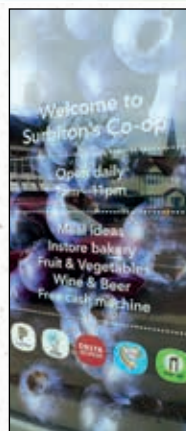
All own-label food qualifies for a dividend of 5% to Co-op members. The 'divi' is the oldest high-street

bonus scheme, dating from 1844 and costing £1 to join.

A further 1% goes to local good causes nominated by shoppers.

The UK's largest Fairtrade stockist, the Co-op makes a point of its sustainable ethical stance, opposing pesticide use. Surbiton is the newest of 2,700 UK Co-ops, and also has a Costa Express.

The new store, on the ground floor of the Surbiton Point flats at 2a Ellerton Road, is open 7am-11pm, seven days a week.



The tug-of-war at last year's Berrylands Festival

Heave! Tug-of-war to be festival hit

The Berrylands Festival is being held on Sunday July 2, with stalls, games, inflatables, beer tent and a barbecue.

It is being staged at the scout HQ in Stirling Walk (the track off Raeburn Avenue, opposite the Pine Gardens junction), 11am-3pm, with free entry.

It follows last year's successful inaugural event, but this time has the benefit of lottery funding.

All money raised will go towards upgrading the Berrylands Scout Group's meeting hall, including a new roof, new electrics and heating.

"The festival's all about bringing the community together for a fun afternoon," said organiser John Sweeney. "We want everyone to feel welcome."

This year's attractions include a

coconut shy, an exhibition of dancing by the Zara Handley school, a Dads v Firemen tug-of-war, a climbing wall, bouncy castles for all ages, a fire engine and police car, scout skills workshops, a soft play area, a chance to try sumo wrestling together with a gladiator challenge, bungee trampolines and DJ Dom – billed as Berrylands' top DJ – spinning the wheels.

Are you interested in joining Berrylands Scouts? **Beavers** (age 6-8), **cubs** (8-10), **scouts** (10-14) and **explorers** (14-18) meet at Stirling Walk for lively indoor games and outdoor hiking and camping. And there are always openings for adult volunteers. Email gsl@berrylandsscouts.co.uk or check out the website, www.berrylandsscoutgroup.co.uk

Call to playwrights

Have you written a short play that deserves to be performed – or is it something you've always wanted to do?

The cornerHOUSE one-act play festival is staging the oneACTS, a showcase of original writing, in April next year at the arts centre in Douglas Road.

Numerous subjects have been covered over the 11 years the festival has been running, including plays on Elvis, a mouse hunt, a sudoku addict, the antics of a group of clowns, internet dating, a fun run, and a time-travelling Ofsted inspector.

All the information is on the cornerHOUSE website at www.thech.org or for more details email cornerhouseoneacts@gmail.com.

The deadline for submission of the 15-30 minute plays is Tuesday, October 31. After that, directors will be chosen, and auditions held, and, if your play is chosen, your work will come to life on stage.



Ian Mole and Debra Shepherd in Rupert and the Search for a Modern Adventure, oneACTS 2016

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